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The Michigan Psychiatric Society supports **HB 5927 (H-1)** and **HB 5923**. These bills are important steps toward improved mental health services as envisioned by the Michigan Mental Health Commission, which was convened by the Governor in 2004.

**House Bill 5927 (H-1)** would codify and describe the Office of Medical Director for Mental Health within MDCH. This position, which is not new within MDCH, and which exists in 47 other states, should be recognized and enhanced.

As advisor on mental health policy and clinical matters, the Medical Director for Mental Health would provide a nexus between the state and the sites of delivery of mental health services throughout the system. Clinical quality initiatives should have a home in the office, whose work would include examining and improving the wide variations in practice patterns that exist throughout our state; providing and arranging for clinical consultation, continuing education, working on evidence-based medication guidelines; and bringing advances in chronic illness management from the physical health area into public mental health.

There is a need for improvement in the coordination and support for services between our various systems, including Community Mental Health, state hospitals, substance abuse services, jails, prisons, and juvenile justice settings. In many areas, practices require improvement and standards need to be set and upheld. The Medical Director could provide a level of clinical accountability that would improve the quality of mental health care in Michigan.

**House Bill 5923** would appropriately recognize the protection of recipient rights and the necessary independence of the Office of Recipient Rights by having the Director of this division report solely and directly to the MDCH Director. We support this bill as another important quality and accountability measure.

The Michigan Psychiatric Society would like to thank the Chairman Gaffney, the bill sponsors, Representatives Leland and Amos, and the Committee for considering these bills as first steps toward implementing the Michigan Mental Health Commission recommendations.